

Gerry also helped many visitors to our Capitol cope during a time of tragedy.

He gave the first public tour of the Capitol after two police officers were killed in 1998.

In 2001, Gerry gave the first tour when the Capitol reopened following the terrorist attacks of September 11.

In my opinion, this is a testament to the dedication and the patriotism Gerry has shown during his many years of service to our country.

In May 2007, Gerry was the victim of a brutal home invasion and assault. After this senseless act of violence, he was told by his doctors that he may never walk again.

But Gerry has never taken no for an answer.

After months in the hospital and grueling rehabilitation, Gerry returned to the Capitol, eventually taking a job as an elevator operator.

Again, Gerry impressed all of us in the Senate with his dedication and his generous spirit.

Gerry will soon begin a job at the Department of Health and Human Services. I know I speak for all of us when I say that HHS is lucky to have him.

Gerry makes the Senate a brighter place, and I am truly sorry to see him go. I admire his optimism, his dedication, and especially his courage in the face of adversity.

I wish Gerry well as he moves onto this exciting new challenge.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING LAURA ZISKIN

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Laura Ellen Ziskin, one of Hollywood's most influential film producers, activists, and philanthropists. Laura Ziskin passed away on June 12, 2011, at her home in Santa Monica, CA, after a 7-year battle with cancer. She was 61 years old.

A native of the San Fernando Valley, Laura Ziskin was born on March 3, 1950, to Mae and Jay Ziskin. In 1973, Ziskin graduated from the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts and began working in the entertainment industry first as a game show writer, and then as a personal assistant to producer and director Jon Peters, with whom she would work on the 1976 Barbra Streisand remake of "A Star Is Born."

Over the next three decades, Laura Ziskin became one of the world's most successful female producers. Ziskin's fame quickly grew with her production of 1985's "Murphy's Romance," 1988's "D.O.A.," 1990's megahit "Pretty Woman," and 1991's "What About Bob?" Ziskin's films were both critically acclaimed and well received, with "As Good As It Gets," 1997, "The Thin Red Line," 1998, "Fight Club," 1999, and the recent blockbuster Spider-Man films. In 2002, Laura Ziskin would also

become the first woman to ever produce the Academy Awards—again repeating the feat in 2007.

Laura Ziskin devoted her time and celebrity to improving the lives of others. She gave her support by serving on the boards of organizations such as the National Council of Jewish Women and Education First and was honored by many others, such as the Big Sisters of Los Angeles, the Women's Image Network Award, the Producers Guild of America, City of Hope, and her own alma mater, USC's School of Cinematic Arts. I was also proud to present her with a "Woman Making History" Award for her wonderful work.

When Ziskin was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2004, she immediately became heavily involved in creating a new model for cancer research. In 2008, she founded the nonprofit Stand Up To Cancer, SU2C, in collaboration with friends and colleagues, Katie Couric and Sherry Lansing and the Entertainment Industry Foundation, among others. Ziskin used her film production skills to be a driving force for raising funds for cancer research and support services, including by producing television specials in 2008 and 2010 that aired on major international networks.

Throughout her illness, Laura never quit either her professional or charitable work. She touched the lives of countless individuals and families who struggle with cancer by giving them hope that one day, there will be a cure. In one of her last blog postings, she urged others to take a stand. She wrote, "Take a stand—for yourself, for a loved one . . . for anyone in the fight. Let's make everyone diagnosed with cancer a survivor."

Laura Ziskin is survived by her partner, Alvin Sargent, her daughter, Julia Barry, and her son-in-law, Eli Dansky. •

FIGHTING BLINDNESS

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, for most people, it is a given that they are able to see the many wonderful sights the world has to offer. But in this country, more than 10 million people are affected by retinal diseases, such as retinitis pigmentosa and age-related macular degeneration, that result in blindness. These people are being robbed of their vision, plain and simple. By 2020, as the population continues to age, that number is expected to reach 15 million. These diseases might not attract much attention, but their impact on the lives of our friends, family members, and constituents is significant.

Later this month, in Baltimore, MD, the Foundation Fighting Blindness, a private nonprofit that has raised more than \$425 million in research funding, will host its national VISIONS Conference. It will gather together visually challenged people from across the United States, as well as eight other countries, along with renowned researchers committed to finding treatments and cures for these diseases and physicians providing patient care.

The Foundation will also celebrate its 40th anniversary by looking back on four decades of breakthroughs, progress, and hope in the field of retinal disease research. There is a lot to celebrate, as recent advances in research, including a number of clinical trials, have given new hope for restoring vision. Results from one breakthrough study funded in part by the Foundation Fighting Blindness show that gene therapy restored vision in patients suffering from a severe retinal disease. In fact, a 9-year-old boy who had lost his vision almost completely was able to play baseball and read the chalkboard in his class for the first time.

This life-changing work is possible thanks to the Foundation Fighting Blindness, which, through various fundraising efforts, provides the capital necessary to launch innovative, results-oriented research—the kind of research promising enough to draw funding from other sources, such as the National Eye Institute, one of the National Institutes of Health. Now, as the momentum continues to build, a partnership between the private and public sectors is crucial to eradicating blinding diseases.

I congratulate the Foundation Fighting Blindness on its 40th anniversary. With the help of this organization and the National Eye Institute, research will continue to flourish until cures are realized. •

BOWDLE, SOUTH DAKOTA

• Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the 125th anniversary of the founding of the city of Bowdle, SD. Bowdle, like many of the cities in South Dakota, was founded for its position along the railroad tracks.

Alex M. Bowdle, an employee for Chicago & Milwaukee Railroad, founded Bowdle in 1886. He chose the location for its readily available access to clean water. This water was essential for the trains to use in their boilers, and helped to keep the trains moving on schedule. The water also greatly benefited area farmers who needed it for irrigation of their crops.

Bowdle through the years has continued to be a thriving community. Their commitment to education can be seen in the graduates of the Bowdle School District. In addition city of Bowdle has many outdoor recreation options including pheasant hunting and the Bowdle Golf Club, which residents believe is one of the best courses in the State.

Bowdle's residents have a strong local community and take pride in their city. To celebrate the momentous occasion the city is planning to hold a street dance with live music, along with many other events to bring the surrounding community together to share stories and experiences of the beloved city of Bowdle.

I am proud to publicly honor Bowdle on this memorable occasion. Small